

GREETINGS FROM COOLIDGE SCHOOL

May 5, 2014

www.shrewsbury-ma.gov/schools/coolidge

Dear Families,

This past week Coolidge had several reasons to celebrate the value of teamwork. In our second grades, where high class sizes persist, teachers worked hard to preserve the core engaging aspects of the biography reports for their young learners. I can't imagine it was easy- in fact, Abe Lincoln (a.k.a. Savannah, in Ms. Rinker's class) reminded me of this when she stopped to ask me if I recognized her hat. The work that she put into assembling her dark suit and homemade hat was touching- the spiel she shared as she prepared to change out of the costume was even more impressive. I was delighted to give her a second audience- and mindful that there were likely several other students who would have appreciated the same attention. This brings me to Friday's All School Meeting, led by Ms. Fallis with help from that same team and Ms. Nurmikko (and a tech assist from Mrs. Raymond) where some additional biographers enjoyed sharing with an audience of younger peers. As terrific as our shares have been, with nearly 400 children, finding slots for everyone to bring their expertise to the fore at ASM has also required some juggling. Just as importantly, finding ample time and resources to ensure that every student receives the level of academic support they need is a challenge. Here kudos go to teachers at grades one, three and four, who shared students across their classrooms this week in order to create small groups by skill. Needless to say, mapping out the topics they'd teach and deciding which students would participate in each group required a significant commitment of time outside of regularly scheduled meetings. In fact, teachers at grade three met with small groups of students before school in order to make sure their students felt prepared for MCAS.

As a principal I am incredibly proud of the extra effort our staff demonstrate as part of their work; it shows just how often Coolidge staff go "above and beyond" in service to students. Simply put, our staff are already working hard to shield your children- our students- from some of the current operating constraints. Depending on the budget for next year, there will either be three or four sections of students at grades 3 and 4 as well. With only three sections, class sizes for grades 2-4 at Coolidge are projected to become 27-29. On that note, please ask your child's teacher if you are interested in lending a hand yourself. I think you'll find volunteering an eye opening experience.

Sincerely,



Amy Clouter
Principal

Updated superintendent's budget recommendation:

On Wednesday evening, Dr. Sawyer presented an updated budget recommendation to the School Committee that includes possible reductions that may need to be made next year. The presentation also included commentary

from Mr. Todd Bazydlo, SHS Principal, regarding the high school's challenging situation. This information, as well as the video of the School Committee meeting, can be found under the FY15 Budget link [here](#) or on the School Department website at <http://schools.shrewsbury-ma.gov>.

School Committee public budget hearing:

The School Committee will hold a public hearing regarding the updated budget recommendations, including the potential cuts, on **Monday, May 12 at 7pm in the Selectmen's Room at Town Hall, 100 Maple Ave.** The School Committee invites public comment on the revised recommendations and will consider this public feedback prior to voting on a formal budget recommendation to Town Meeting. Please consider attending the hearing to share your feedback, or you can do so by sending an email to schoolcommittee@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us.

IMPORTANT DATES:

May 6 & 7	Gr. 3 Math MCAS
May 6	Annual Town Election
May 9	Grade 4 visits SELCO
May 10	<i>Relay for Life Grade 4 Walk, at OMS</i>
May 12	Early Release Day: students dismissed at 12:15, no lunch
May 13, 14	Grade 4 Math MCAS
May 13	PTO Meeting, 7 pm in the Media Center
May 16	School Store
May 26	Memorial Day, no school
May 28	SELCO visits Grade 4
	Teacher Appreciation luncheon
June 13	Field Day / Technology Walk-A-Thon

Please note: We will add additional June days to next week's listserv. We are still coordinating times for completion date and medal ceremonies with other schools. Thanks for understanding!

A Note From the Nurse

This week, please consider joining millions of people across the country and participate in Screen Free Week also known as TV Turnoff Week. Screen Free Week encourages opportunities that promote active living, reduce sedentary behaviors and motivate kids, families, and adults. It helps to assist families to lower the use of TV/Screen Time and live more active and healthy lives. Why should you try it? Studies show that by reducing television,

videos, electronic games and recreational use of the computers is a leading way to reduce obesity, increase literacy and standardized test scores and dramatically curtail acts of violence and bullying.

Some interesting facts:

*The average child watches 3 hours of TV per day (2 hours of quality programming is the maximum).

*Youth spend more time in front of the TV, video and computer than they spend on anything else besides sleeping. Moreover, children exposed to television on a daily basis show significant drops in their creativity, problem solving ability and reading levels.

*50% of American households have three or more TV sets!

*Studies show watching 10 or more hours of TV a week negatively impacts children's social performance. Children who watch violence on TV are more likely to display aggressive behavior.

Here are a few tips:

1. Keep TV off during meals.
2. Instead of settling into a TV routine, exercise as a family.
3. Designate certain days of the week as TV free days, and hide the remote
4. Have a family game night, read, or pull out puzzles.

Good Luck!

Katie Zimmermann RN

FYI

1. Last week we celebrated our skillful secretary, Mrs. Laura Stacey. This Wednesday we look forward to Nurse Appreciation Day. Please join me in recognizing the outstanding work of our nurse, Mrs. Katie Zimmermann. We are very fortunate to have her medical knowledge as well as her compassionate care of our students. In addition to providing care for bumps, bruises, and scratched knees, "Mrs. Z" provides well care, friendly reminders and social and a listening ear for students in need. As you may know, Mrs. Popp is retiring at the end of this school year. We will

certainly miss her significant contributions to our school community.

2. As you know, one of the tasks teachers tackle in May has to do with class placement. Accordingly, we invite interested parents and families to participate in the process by sharing their insights and describing their child's needs. Parent input is an important factor we consider in building class lists. At the same time, making plans for next year will be complicated, because the number of classes we will have at Coolidge depends on the outcome of the budget situation. We have a lot of uncertainty going into the scheduling as well as placement process, and parents should know that this makes what is already a complex process even harder. If you would like to fill out a placement form you can find it attached and/or on our website. That said, please do not feel that you must fill out a form- or assume that filling out the form means that all your requests will be honored. The form is merely a way for us to consider new information and to make decisions with home insights in mind.
3. Please remember to practice safe driving habits in our parking lots. Going slow in the pick up and drop off line and taking that "extra look" is really important, especially in the winter season. Your care for our students and staff is appreciated. **Our neighbors on Florence Street would be most grateful if drivers in our pick up line by 2:30 respect their driveway space especially so that they too can pick up their children and grandchildren in the afternoon**